



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025 with funding from
Graduate Theological Union

<https://archive.org/details/historicalstudy00unse>

AN HISTORICAL STUDY OF
SELF-SUPPORT IN SOME KAREN MISSIONS OF BURMA

A Thesis
submitted in candidacy for the degree of
Bachelor of Divinity

in the
Berkeley Baptist Divinity School
by
Chester Leroy Klein



Department of
Missions

March 9, 1936.

OUTLINE

Introduction: The Meaning and Use of Term "Self-Support".

- I. Lack of Definiteness.
 - A. Not of recent origin.
 - B. Principles not understood.
- II. The Pronouncements about Self-Support.
 - A. Self-support an ideal.
 - B. The Meaning in "Rethinking Missions".
 - C. Factors involved.
 - D. Dr. D. J. Fleming's definition.
- III. The Purpose of the Study.
 - A. Operation of two theories in Karen Mission.
 - B. An historical survey in self-support.
 - 1. In Moulmein, Rangoon, Bassein Missions.
 - 2. In Shwegyin.

Chapter One: Self-Support in the Moulmein-Rangoon-Bassein Karen Missions.

- I. The Missionaries and "Missions" Attitude.
 - A. The first converts in Moulmein Town.
 - 1. One church.
 - 2. No racial distinctions.
 - B. The first Karen Christians in the jungle.
 - 1. Homogeneous and illiterate.
 - 2. A Karen department of Burmese Mission.
 - 3. Missionary pastors of native churches.

C. The "mission" system.

1. Natural arrangement at the time.
2. Karen lay preachers.
3. Central treasury and missionary control.
4. Converts not expected to contribute.

D. The discontent among missionaries.

1. Inequalities developed.
2. "Maulmainia" and "Maulmainphobia".
3. Desire to develop apart from Burmese Mission.
4. Shifts in points of emphasis.

II. The Karens and their Missionaries' Attitude toward Self-Support.

A. Karens assist in proclamation of the Gospel.

1. Become evangelists.
2. Build preaching places.
3. Gather offerings.
4. Individuals efforts.
5. Some statistics.

B. C. H. Carpenter and "Self-support in Bassein".

1. Overlooks some facts about Moulmein.
2. Not unprejudiced.

C. The sponsors of self-support.

1. N. E. Harris' silence.
2. E. L. Abbott - a logical exponent of self-support.

D. The Moulmein Karens and education.

1. A mission compound developed.

2. Karen labour donated.
3. A coeducational school plant.
4. A theological seminary.
5. Unpaid services and education.

III. The Separation of the Karen and Burman Missions.

A. Complicating factors.

1. Financial autonomy delayed.
2. Language difficulties.

B. Separation and propagation of new missions.

1. Abbott and Karens in Bassein.
2. Vinton and Karens in Rangoon.
3. Missions a phase of self-support.
4. The responsibility of Binney and Harris.

IV. Second Burmese War and Self-Support.

A. Reports from new Karen areas.

1. The Burmese king's country.

B. Karens allied with British.

2. Fight to prevent extermination.

C. The Karer eagerness to evangelize new territories.

V. The Controversy of 1853 and Self-Support.

A. New opportunities and old issues.

1. Principles of self-support unlearned.

B. The Deputation from America.

1. C. H. Carpenter's resume of the controversy.
2. N. E. Harris and the Deputation.

C. Karen missionaries leave the Society.

1. The Free Mission Society formed.

2. Misunderstandings cleared up.

D. Some evaluations of the controversy.

1. The loyalty of Karens to their missionaries.

2. New mission stations opened.

3. Rangoon-Bassein stations strengthened.

4. Tavoy and Moulmein stripped of best leaders.

5. "Partnership" in the Gospel.

6. Removal of seminary from Moulmein.

E. The new task in Moulmein.

1. Lesson of self-support anew.

2. Karen Missions to Siam.

3. A Home Mission Society.

4. New mission station and outposts.

VI. A New Step in Self-Support.

A. Karen Mission Societies legally chartered.

1. Moulmein.

B. The work and character of the Rangoon Home Mission Society.

C. The function of the Home Mission Society in Bassein.

VII. Factors conditioning Self-Support.

A. Continuity of missionary personnel.

1. Frequent changes in missionary staff.

2. Frequent changes in native staff.

3. The three stations compared.

B. Geographical conditions.

1. Agriculture and communications.

2. Position and markets.

3. Extent and population.

VIII. Achievements in Self-Support.

A. Education.

1. The schools.
2. The erection of buildings.
3. The provision of endowments.

B. Evangelism and extension.

1. Characteristic of Karens.
2. Agencies in use.
3. The collection and use of endowments.

C. Leadership and self-support.

1. Selection.
2. Training.
3. Support.

D. Leaders and administrative responsibility.

1. Become heads of missions.
2. Superintendents of schools.

Chapter Two: Self-Support in Shwegyin.

I. Shwegyin and Its People.

A. The geography.

1. Location and extent.
2. Topography.

B. The People.

1. Mountain folk.
2. Simplicity of occupation.

II. The Founder of the Mission.

A. The early training of Rev. N. E. Harris.

1. Hard and rigorous conditions.

2. Persistent and scholarly.

B. The training as a missionary.

1. Years of apprenticeship.

2. Development of convictions.

3. Ideas of self-support.

III. The Early Years of the Shwegyin Karen Mission.

1. The return of Saw Doo Moo.

2. Tahree followers.

3. End of Second Burmese War.

4. Untimely deaths in Harris family.

5. Cessation of Mission leadership.

IV. Development of Self-Support 1861-1906.

A. Missionary leadership until 1866.

B. An unusual Karen letter.

1. Request Harris' reappointment.

2. Send money for cost of passage.

C. A new venture in self-support.

1. Harris' reappointment.

2. The building project.

3. Paw Maw's statement on receiving aid.

D. A Karen leader in charge.

1. Saw Kah Chur's return from America.

2. Harris' retirement in 1882.

E. Self-support against overwhelming odds.

1. The Third Burmese War.

2. Loss by fire.

3. Loss of funds.

4. Loss of confidence.

F. Confidence restored and self-support.

1. The school rebuilt.

2. The Karens ask for a missionary.

3. Rev. E. N. Harris becomes the leader.

4. Borrowed money repaid.

G. Large advances in self-support.

1. Karen foreign missions developed.

2. Outstations established.

3. Contributions increased.

4. A Home Mission Society organized.

H. A new order in mission affairs.

1. Separation of Nyaunglebin.

2. A reorganization.

3. A new vision.

V. Continuity of Leadership and Self-Support.

A. Missionary leadership intermittent.

B. Indigenous leadership.

1. Scholastic qualifications of early leaders.

2. Qualities of character.

3. Standards and qualifications raised.

4. New leaders.

VI. Attitude of Karens and Evaluations.

A. The heritage from the past.

1. A unique resolution.

2. What it achieved.

B. The Karens and their school.

1. A Karen superintendent.

C. Evaluations.

Chapter Three: Findings, Comparisons, and Summary.

I. Self-Support and the Founding of Missions.

A. The ideals of the missionary body.

1. In a pioneer enterprize.

2. Social and religious heritage.

B. The ideals of the Karens.

1. Effect of the Y'wa traditions.

2. Desire to share in self-support.

3. Active participation in the work.

II. Practical Problems of Self-Support.

A. Enthusiasm and successes.

1. Pressure for numbers of converts.

2. Preachers employed.

B. Different standards of living.

1. Karen preachers paid less.

2. Discontent about salary scale.

3. Lack of funds and economy.

III. Separation, Education and Self-Support.

A. Karens propagate Christianity.

1. Group consciousness developed.

2. Christianity not a foreigner's religion.

3. Education of race and ministry desired.

B. Schools established.

1. Work of J. G. Binney.

2. Missionaries not in agreement.

C. Binney's plan for education.

1. A pronouncement on self-support.

2. E. L. Abbott's approval.

D. Abbott's attitude on self-support.

1. His statement on self-support.

2. Similar to other Karen missionaries.

3. Bassein Home Mission Society.

IV. Self-Support until 1853.

A. Comparison of Moulmein-Rangoon-Bassein.

B. Hindrances to self-support.

1. A statement about Moulmein.

2. The "mission's system".

C. The issues before the Deputation of 1853.

1. Lack of agreement on self-support.

2. Christianity must become indigenous to the Karens.

3. Agreement on evangelism.

4. Lack of agreement on education.

V. Self-Support after 1853.

A. Devolution of responsibility.

1. Missionaries become advisors.

VI. Self-Support in Shwegyin.

A. Sufferings and sacrifices in the first years.

B. Integration of ideas of self-support.

VII. Achievements in Self-Support.

A. Per capita giving.

1. Compared with other fields.
- B. Evangelism an index of self-support.
 1. The evangelistic zeal in Shwegyin.
 2. Compared with other fields.
- C. Extension and missions enterprises.
 1. Founding of out-stations.
 2. Cooperation in non-Shwegyin projects.
- D. Stewardship and independence.
 1. Grant-in-aid for school building.
 2. School to be mortgaged in perpetuity.
 3. Grant-in-aid rejected.

VIII. Summary Statements on Self-Support.

- A. A mission tradition on self-support.
- B. Self-support in Moulmein-Rangoon-Bassein.
 1. Not impossible from the beginning.
 2. Diminution of aid a makeshift method.
- C. An epitome of self-support.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Source Materials.

- American Baptist Missionary Union, Annual Reports, 1825-1907. New York.
- American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, Annual Reports, 1908-1935. New York.
- Burma Baptist Missionary Convention, Annual Reports, American Baptist Mission Press. Rangoon.
- Burma Baptist Missionary Conference, Reports. American Baptist Mission Press. Rangoon.
- Baptist Missionary Magazine, Volume VII, 1827 - Volume LXXXIX, 1909.
- Minutes of the Moulmein-Karen Association, 1841-1927. In the Sgaw Karen Language.
- Minutes of the Shwegyin Karen Association 1893-1934. In the Sgaw Karen Language.
- Historical Documents and Correspondence.
- The Missionary Jubilee. New York. Sheldon and Company. 1865.
- Woman's American Baptist Foreign Mission Society. Annual Reports. 1872-1913.
- Foreign Missions Policies. American Baptist Foreign Mission Society and Women's American Baptist Foreign Mission Society. 1925-1926.

Books and Monographs

- Binney, Mrs. J. G. Twenty Six Years in Burma. Philadelphia. American Baptist Publication Society. 1859.
- Carpenter, C. H. Self-Support in Bassein. Boston. Rand, Avery and Company. Franklin Press. 1883.
- Fleming, D. J. Devolution in Mission Administration. New York. Fleming H. Revell Company. 1916.
- Harris, E. N. A Star in the East. Philadelphia. American Baptist Publication Society. 1920.
- Harris, Mrs. J. E. History of the Shwegyin Karen Mission. Chicago. The Englewood Press. 1907.
- Howard, R. L. Baptists of Burma. Philadelphia. Judson Press. 1922. 1931.
- Marshall, H. I. The Karen People of Burma. Columbus, Ohio. Ohio State University Press.
- Merriam, E. F. A History of American Baptist Missions. Philadelphia. American Baptist Publication Society. 1900.
- Robbins, J. C. Following the Pioneers. Philadelphia. American Baptist Publication Society. 1922.
- Wayland, F. Life of Adoniram Judson, two volumes. Boston. Phillips, Sampson and Company. 1854.
- Smith, S. F. Missionary Sketches. VI ed. 1890. Boston. W. G. Corthell, publisher. Mission Rooms.

Special Reports.

Laymen's Foreign Mission Inquiry. Rethinking Missions.
New York. Harpers, 1932.

Laymen's Foreign Mission Inquiry. Regional Commission on
Appraisal. India-Burma, Volume I, part I. New York.
Harpers. 1933.

Fact Finders Report. India-Burma, Volume IV, part II.

Report of Committee on Policy and Program. Burma. American
Baptist Mission. 1931.

Report on Christian Education in Burma. Burma. American
Baptist Mission. 1932.

THE MEANING AND USE OF THE TERM "SELF-SUPPORT"

Introduction

I. Lack of Definiteness

In the pages of mission literature and in the files of the mission societies, at home and abroad, reference is made repeatedly, to "self-supporting, self-propagating and self-governing churches" on the mission fields. The slogan is old and the principles are historical. These words have been the slogan for decades and have formed the basis for many long and warm debates, whenever managing committees, missionaries and nationals have tried to formulate policies, have considered funds and the placement of workers. When missionaries attempt to think through the problems to a satisfactory basis of self-support, they are forced into dilemmic situations in which two main issues are pushed forward for consideration and answer. There is a lack of precision in the use of terms, and a fog of ideas obscures the direction to be taken. The issues involved baffle the wits of missionary administrators and indigenous churches. What is self-support, or what is involved in self-support, and what method is the best to realize so estimable a goal?

II. The Pronouncements about Self-Support

The literature of the Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry among the most recent pronouncements on foreign missions, holds forth self-support as an ideal but leaves the problem

1. Carpenter, C. H., "Self-Support in Bassein", preface.

2. Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry. "Rethinking Missions", p. 88.

where the Rev. J. G. Warren did in November 11, 1868, when he wrote:

I sometimes think there is not wisdom enough in the whole Baptist denomination of America to manage their foreign missions one day, and if the Head of the Church does not do it, I do not know who will.¹

The Baptists, however, have attacked the problems of self-support on the foreign fields with the most pre-eminent success in Burma among the Karens and people who have somewhat similar social and religious heritage and among whom Karens have maintained evangelists.

The highest percentage of self-support in East Asia, if not in the world, has been attained by Karen (Baptist) churches in Burma The lack of accurate financial records and loose use of the term 'self-support' makes it impossible to give comprehensive figures or to make close comparisons between denominations. Many churches are 'self-supporting' only because they pay nothing toward the support of cooperating missionaries and derive a considerable fraction of their receipts from mission employees².

The above quotation is confusing, for it does not give a clear idea as to what is meant by "self-support". By this reasoning the support of Western missionaries would be a legitimate charge upon the funds of the Karen churches. This would be tantamount to excusing the sending churches from maintaining the personal ties that bind them to their mission task. When personal ties are severed, interest wanes and dies; the spiritual life is jeopardized and impaired. Separation from the home base, - lack of the personal bonds between the home base and the mission churches was one of the

1. Fleming, D. J., "Laymen's Foreign Mission Inquiry,"
Regional Commission on Appraisal. India, Burma,
Vol. I, Part 1, p. 77.

significant causes in the decline of the Nestorian churches. The situation is further confused because the policy set forth in the latter part of the quotation would have indigenous people supporting themselves - that is their own work, plus the support of a person not a member of the same racial and social group. We can seriously question whether the foregoing policies should be considered a part of self-support. Finally, the quotation is open to question, because it starts out with a Karen group and concludes with a situation wherein the churches of the Burmese, Kachin, Chin, Shan Indian and other groups seem to be included.

Dr. D. J. Fleming writes: "The Karens provide one of the most notable instances of development of Christian work, with a minimum of mission grants, found anywhere in the world. Of their 977 organized Baptist churches, 98% are recorded as self-supporting."¹

Fleming defines "self-support" in terms of mission grants. The work that receives least foreign money is most self-supporting. He is more precise in his definition but gives the popular idea, namely, the financial aspect, but says nothing about methods for reaching self-dependence. He does not mention such things as the maintenance of an adequate ministry, effective evangelization and extension of the church through a vital mission enterprise that causes the church to grow and become self-reliant. We may fairly question any definition of self-support that ignores such important factors pertaining to the life of a church.

1. Laymen's Missions Inquiry. Fact Finders' Report,
India, Burma. Vol. IV, Part 2, p. 645.

III. The Purpose of the Study

In a book of the section dealing with the materials from which the conclusions of "Rethinking Missions" is drawn, primarily, the following significant statement appears:

There have been at least two conflicting theories within the Baptist mission with reference to self-support and each has been shaping policy through enough decades to make an historic appraisal possible.¹

This paper proposes to make a historical survey of the way these two theories have operated in the Karen Mission. To do this the course of development will be traced from Moulmein through Rangoon and Bassein. This will be considered the system of a gradual diminution of foreign aid until the churches arrive at a point where foreign aid is cut off and the indigenous churches will bear complete responsibility for their work with or without missionary advice. The second course will trace the development of the theory of complete responsibility from the inception of the work, with or without missionary advice. This line will start at Moulmein and head up in Shwegyin.

CHAPTER ONE

SELF-SUPPORT IN THE MOULMEIN-RANGOON-BASSEIN KAREN MISSIONS

I. The Missionaries and "Missions" Attitude.

A. The First Converts in Moulmein Town.

A few years after the First Burmese War the British headquarters in Burma were established in Moulmein. To this place the Baptist missionaries moved and built their mission center. Ko Tha Byu, the first convert to Christianity, was found in the Moulmein bazaar. He was baptized shortly afterwards in Tavoy, and at Tavoy the first Karen converts were received into the church. However, in the jungles around Moulmein the first seven Karen churches were organized. These churches were different from the churches in Moulmein and Tavoy towns where the membership was composed of Burmans, Karens, Talaings, South Indians, English soldiers and American missionaries.

B. The First Karen Christians in the Jungle.

The churches in the jungle were homogeneous Karen groups and totally illiterate. These churches were carried on the rolls of the Burman Mission though as a Karen Department and with slight differences shared in the same financial set up as the town churches with the missionaries as pastors of native churches. This was necessary by the very nature of the case until sufficiently intelligent and worthy Karens could be secured to act as lay preachers. Missions were a

1. Fleming, D. J., "Devolution in Mission Administration", p. 15.

pioneer enterprize and no one knew yet what other course to pursue. There were no blazed trails of successful policy to follow. Converts came to a central place to be examined. The missionaries tested and examined the faith of the converts, baptized them, gave pastoral oversight to the churches and left an indigenous person in charge of the handful of converts until the time of the next visit. This Karen lay worker was paid a monthly salary from the central treasury to which all funds went and from which all payments were made by the missionary.

C. The "Mission" System.

Fleming in his "Devolution in Mission Administration", a study of the Legislative History of Five Missionary Societies in India, reveals that the tendency for organization of men, industry and big business in the realm of economics "....has in the realm of evangelization led to the formation of strong aggressive bodies of superintendents called missions"¹. This was true in the pioneer days of the Baptist mission in Burma. Missionaries in a given locality were grouped as senior and junior missionaries, missionary assistants (the wives of the foreign missionaries), native assistants and converts or members. Authority was exercised by right of seniority and majority agreement. The question of self-support was not seriously considered. Great emphasis was placed on contrasting the Buddhist doctrine of merit with the Christian plan of free grace. Hence converts were not

1. Carpenter, C. H., "Self-Support in Bassein", p. 183.

2. Ibid., p. 134-135.

asked to contribute money to the Christian cause. Rev. C. H. Carpenter reports:

It is a tradition in Burma, that the great founder of the Burman mission was so deeply impressed with the falsity and destructive nature of the Boodhist doctrine of merit, that, while he gave to good objects most liberally himself, he would rarely call upon the converts under his care for contributions for any object.¹

D. The Discontent Among Missionaries.

Under the plan in vogue a large number of native assistants were hired on a regular pay system and were classified as lay preachers, readers, and visitors whose duties were to visit the zayats or way-side resting places, the homes and the shrines to preach, to read and to distribute Christian tracts and to engage people in conversation about Christian truths. They worked in Moulmein town where the people were most literate. In the jungles the unschooled Karen lay preachers had the pastoral oversight of the flocks of illiterate converts. Their zeal took them long distances through lonely and dangerous forests, "preaching the word". Under the system of hire in operation, the salary of the Karen assistants was from one-third to one-half less than that received by the Burmans who confined their work to the town.

Carpenter writes further:

In one of the Burman missions, e.g., nearly every male disciple, and several Christian wives and daughters, were for years under the pay of the mission as preachers, col-porters, Bible-women, or school-teachers.²

The reference undoubtedly describes conditions in the Moulmein Burman Church, in 1847 - 1848. Such a state of affairs, and such a discrimination, did create an unhappy situation in the Karen churches and it is not surprising that there was considerable feeling among the missionaries and the Karen converts. The letters and reports from 1843-1853 of such men as Messrs. E. L. Abbott, J. S. Beecher, J. G. Binney, F. Mason, F. H. Vinton, all working among the Karens carry a prolonged debate with considerable fervor about this practice which was termed "Maulmania and Maulmain-phobia". These letters also concern themselves with the problems of a separate and distinct work among Karens, the founding of a Karen Theological seminary to train preachers to meet Karen problems, and the founding of schools to produce an educated laity among Karens.

The reports to the Missionary Union between 1848-1854 vary considerably because they were compiled on different bases. Dr. A. Judson's letter to Mr. Anderson, at Port Louis, Isle of France, August 5, 1849 found in F. Wayland's Memoirs of Dr. A. Judson, Volume II, page 325, states there were above a dozen Karen churches in the regions of Moulmein. This would include the Karen church in town. Altogether, the membership was about twelve hundred. The Karen church at Dong Yan had begun to pay the entire salary of its pastor about 1844. Dr. A. Judson says there were two Burman churches. This probably means the church at Amherst and the church at Moulmein. By this figuring, then the Moulmein church would have about one

hundred and fifty members. Or, Dr. Judson could mean the Amherst and the Rangoon churches. The reference is not clear. The Moulmein church we are certain had about one hundred and fifty members including the missionaries. Many of its native membership were on the payroll of the mission. There was a feeling among Karen missionaries that there should be a shift in methods. The increase in the number of Karen churches and the ingathering of great numbers of converts made necessary, they felt, that emphasis should be placed on developing churches by cooperation with converts through building up a native leadership. This meant trusting the native pastor with more responsibility and giving them more prominence. In our modern terms this would be giving the nature of Christianity a chance to develop as against nurturing a select group into the Christian religion. Thus in two decades after the baptizing of Ko Tha Byu, May 16, 1828, the whole problem of self-support was before the missionaries.

II. The Karens and Their Missionaries Attitude Toward Self-Support.

A. Karens Assist in Proclamation of the Gospel.

There is no question of the Karen attitude in wanting to assist in the proclamation of the gospel. From the very beginning Karen converts travelled long distances to bring the good news to fellow Karens. The same spirit that characterized the early converts has continued in a marked degree to this day. The first Christians "offered gladly of

1. American Baptist Mission Union Report, 1831, p. 18.

2. The Missionary Jubilee (Baptist), p. 158.

3. American Baptist Mission Union Report, 1845, p. 53.

their means for erecting a zayat".^{1.} This sort of building is used for a preaching place. We read that in 1838 "Karen Christians began to contribute to the spread of the Gospel, offering seventy rupees".^{2.} The early records do not give a detailed account of the native contributions toward self-help. The money was put into the central treasury along with the funds from America and elsewhere. We find that the Karen church at Newville, 1842-1843, built a large teakwood zayat. Dr. J. H. Vinton reported in 1843 that this church contributed in labor and materials to the value of not less than two hundred rupees. In 1845 we have the first instance of a Karen individual paying for the support of a Karen preacher. We read:

Ko Chetthing, formerly an assistant under direction of this society (Moulmein Missionary Society), has made a donation to the society of 100 rupees for the support of Tobaw, whom he wishes the society to employ as his substitute in preaching the Gospel to his countrymen.^{3.}

In 1848 the Karens in Moulmein gave over twenty-two cents per member, the 861 Christians in Rangoon gave seventeen cents per member and the 4500 Bassein-Sandoway Karens gave eleven cents per member. The reports of the various missions leave much to be desired for completeness and hence there may be some discrepancy but they are accurate enough to show that the Karens at Moulmein, and the Karens at Rangoon and Bassein, evangelized by Moulmein Karens working under the direction of missionaries, had entered into the idea of self-support.

B. C. H. Carpenter and "Self-Support in Bassein".

Carpenter in his book: "Self-Support in Bassein" naturally exhibits considerable enthusiasm for his own station and does not take into sufficient consideration the chaos in the Moulmein Karen field resulting from an attempt to break away from a deeply rooted system and organization. He does not give enough value to the struggle and conflict among sincere missionaries over proper methods of work in a pioneer enterprise of self-support, except as it related itself to his predecessors in his own station. Finally, he overlooked the struggle of the new and young Moulmein Karen missionaries J. G. Binney and N. E. Harris in acquiring the use of the vernacular, building a new station, securing physical, racial and financial autonomy, and developing a system of education for the Christian laity.

C. The Sponsors of Self-Support.

Dr. E. L. Abbott of Bassein is mentioned as the "father of self-support", but in the midst of the troubled situation was Rev. Norman Harris who learned and seems to have not expressed his opinions about self-support until 1853. He then made a very significant contribution to theory and practice. Abbott, however, had had a number of years of experience under the Moulmein system and when he was given the opportunity to start a new mission station at Bassein, he could with much greater ease correct faults in mission methods than could the persons who remained to work in the system that had such ingrained traditions of subsidy. To have kept silent

about what was obviously a wrong approach and practice would have been to fail. Abbott was by force of circumstances the logical spokesman for self-support. He did not fail.

D. The Moulmein Karens and Education.

The Moulmein Karens were in the midst of "the system" which was against the development of self-support. There seemed no other way out but to break away from the Burman Mission. Consequently, led by J. H. Vinton and J. G. Binney with the cooperation of the Karens land was secured in the Daingwunkwin section of Moulmein. The jungle was cleared, roads were built, residences, school buildings and dormitories were erected, a complete housing equipment for a theological seminary and vernacular school. This latter school was on a coeducational basis. The Karens contributed money and unpaid labour to make these things possible. Even till now school pupils are responsible for the janitor work in school buildings, on the grounds and in dormitories. Each child is assigned some task in keeping buildings and grounds in good order. This is unpaid service and is looked upon as the pupil's contribution to the school and part of his education. This amounts to a vast sum each year and saves no small sum of money. This early practice set the ideal for all Karen missions.

III. The Separation of the Karen and Burman Missions.

A. Complicating Factors.

Beginning sometime in 1842, Dr. J. H. Vinton agitated for the separation of the Karens from the Burmans. By the last of April, 1845, Dr. and Mrs. J. S. Binney, new missionaries without command of the language, took possession of their new house on the Karen Compound, but it was not until 1848 that the Moulmein Burman and Moulmein Karen Missions finally became distinct enterprises financially. The work was further complicated because of the use of two dialects of Karen.

B. Separation and Propagation of New Missions.

Dr. E. L. Abbott went off to the Bassein area with a number of Moulmein Karen preachers. Vinton went to the Rangoon area in 1842 and he took a number of Karen preachers. Both of these men and the Karens were opening up new territory. Thus, the Moulmein Karen mission had entered into a new phase of self-support and was giving expression to the spiritual law of sacrifice. It was depleting its staff of native leaders so that Christianity might be brought to birth in new areas. In 1846, Dr. Norman Harris came to Moulmein to assist Dr. Binney and these two were together until 1851 when the Binneys returned to America because of ill-health. By this time both Abbott and Vinton had been to America on furlough and had returned and the two young missionaries had succeeded in bringing some sort of order out of

chaos in Moulmein among the Karens, but the Burman situation was unchanged.

IV. Second Burmese War and Self-Support.

A new situation confronted the Karens. Their preachers were bringing back word of new and untouched Karen areas under the control of the Burmese king. Henzada, Shwegyin and Toungoo called for the gospel and begged for teachers, preachers and missionaries. The second war between England and Burma started in 1852 and the whole country was thrown into confusion by large roving bands of robbers who plundered and burned the villages and persecuted the Karens who allied themselves with the British. In the Irrawaddy Delta area, comprising Rangoon, Bassein and Henzada the Karen Christians led in the fight to prevent national extermination. In the Shwegyin and Toungoo areas, there were no Christians, but, the Karens prevented the roving bands of robbers from penetrating into the Karen hill territory. The plains territory, however, was laid utterly desolate. By the peace treaty terms all these territories came under British rule and great doors for evangelism were opened. The Karens from Moulmein and Tavoy, the territory to the south of Moulmein, were ready again to deplete their ranks to send out Karen teachers and Karen missionaries in another movement of extension of the church.

1. Carpenter, C. H., "Self-Support in Bassein", pp.248-9.

V. The Controversy of 1853 and Self-Support.

A. New Opportunities and Old Issues.

This was a golden opportunity and the missionaries with the Karens were eager to seize it, but difficulties had to be cleared up as to the way the missions were to be conducted. Principles of self-support must be determined. The famous Deputation of 1853 was sent out from America to advise with the missionaries about policies. There were many debates and the participants spoke with utmost conviction, at the meetings in Moulmein.

B. The Deputation from America.

Carpenter wrote:

A rigid New Testament ideal of missions, and a slightly exaggerated authority on the one hand, a magnifying of 'Baptist principles', and perhaps an extreme sense of personal independence on the other, furnished a background for the dissensions between the Deputation and a minority of Karen missionaries. The contention was sharp and long.... It is safe to say probably, that both were partly right and partly wrong. Certainly donors have a right to say how their gifts shall be expended. If secretaries and committees are responsible to the bodies appointing them, then men sent on the Lord's missions are in a degree responsible to human agents who send them, and, if they cannot conscientiously carry out the policy of their supporters, they should resign, and seek support elsewhere, as Beecher and his associates did.¹

C. Karen Missionaries Leave the Society.

This is the point at which Harris took radical issue with the Deputation largely on the issue of self-

support and self-government of the churches. He is reported to have been the first missionary to sever connections with the Mission Society over the burning issues before the Deputation. A number of others went out with him and formed the Baptist Free Mission Society, though it is believed Harris did not enter the new organization. Harris was the last to come back into the fellowship of the American Baptist Missionary Union and that not until 1865. By that time the hurts had been healed and the principles of self-support clearly seen and faults had begun to be rectified.

D. Some Evaluations of the Controversy.

There were wide differences of opinion about the use of money, the amount of land necessary for a mission compound, the place education should have in a mission enterprise, the relations of missionaries to the supporting constituency in America and to one another, methods in evangelism and the use of printed materials, the place and prominence that should be given to native pastors, questions of ordination and theological education, - these and many more problems came under review during the many weeks of conference with the Deputation from America. It is obvious that the missionaries and the members of the Deputation were at grips with very fundamental principles and it is not surprising that good brethren should disagree in this, a pioneer enterprise. Was it all a discreditable performance? Hardly! We could wish the tempers of the parties had been less vehement, but what were the gains?

1. Carpenter, op. cit., p. 249.

The issue would have been more doubtful, had it not been for a third party, - English Christians residing in the East, and especially Christian Karens, whose existence and determining power would seem to have been for the time almost forgotten by the Deputation.¹

The Karens refused to receive any new men whatever, but clung loyally to their missionaries and over half the churches left the mission. (These came back after the issues cleared.) The gains were numerous. The development of education was not restricted. The Karen stations at Toungoo, Shwegyin, Henzada and the Pwo Karen station at Bassein were founded while the other stations at Bassein and Rangoon were strengthened. The older stations at Tavoy and Moulmein were again stripped of their best workers and went as missionaries into the new areas. Best of all, a sense of partnership was instilled in missionaries, Karens and the churches in America. Henceforth the missionary worked in an advisory capacity with the Karens. Committees planned the work with the missionary always in the minority. He seldom exercised his right to vote on an question. He contented himself with setting forth the positive and negative aspects of the various problems and left the responsibility for any action to the Karens. Partnership in planning and responsibility of Karens in prominent positions became the basis for conducting the work. The question of Karen theological education was solved in a few years by the removal of the seminary away from Moulmein and the new students were trained in an atmosphere where the traditions of payment or salaries from foreign funds was not current.

E. The New Task in Moulmein.

To J. Wade was given the task of reorganizing Moulmein from which all the best pastors had gone as missionaries to the new stations. This was a slow and painful task indeed. It was complicated by lack of continuity of missionaries. The Karens were not permitted to conduct their business at associations in their native tongue until 1882. This condition was not true of other fields which could use their native tongue from the very beginning.

The Moulmein Karens were interested in the Karens of Siam as early as the 1850's but nothing permanent was done until 1881 when several missionaries were placed near Cheng-mai Siam. In 1884 a Home Mission Society or committee was formed. A new station was opened at Thaton in 1880 and assistance given at the opening of Papun 1884. In 1900 Kaw-kareik and in 1927, the Thaungyin Division were explored and made mission territory.

VI. A New Step in Self-Support.

A. Karen Mission Societies Legally Chartered.

In 1923, the writer drew up the charter for the Moulmein Karen Home Mission Society and this registered society holds lands, endowments and schools. It is a very live organization supporting over twenty workers.

B. The Work and Character of the Rangoon Home Mission Society.

The Rangoon Karens organized their Home Mission Society in 1854 "for aggressive work among the heathen".

This society has extensive mission work in Siam as well as in the Rangoon field itself. Its career has been marked by masterly achievements among other races, too.

C. The Function of the Home Mission Society in Bassein.

The Bassein Sgaw Karen Mission Society was organized in 1851. This was a society to bring order among the churches and pastors of the Bassein field. It was an organization to take care of the contributions from the churches. Later on, this society sent Karen missionaries to many other tribes in Burma. It has been a very large factor in sending missionaries among the Kachins and now supplies the personnel for work among the Shans.

VII. Factors Conditioning Self-Support.

A. Continuity of Missionary Personnel.

Other factors having an important place in self-support should be considered. We have seen how Moulmein gave the best of her indigenous staff and the continuity of teaching the principles of self-support had to be learned anew several times. No less important is the continuity of the missionary staff. In the 104 years of its existence Moulmein has had missionaries specifically designated to it for 83 years. That is, for twenty-one years it either had no missionary or had a makeshift arrangement. Messrs. Wade, Boardman, Judson, Vinton, Binney, Harris, Hibbard, Rand, Webster, Price, Bulkley, Calder, Bushell, Weeks, and Klein were men placed in charge of the stations and were new to the people.

Including four Pwo Karen missionaries twelve missionaries learned the language at Moulmein and served apprenticeship there. In its career there have been twenty-two changes in missionary staff. The figure includes return of missionaries from furlough, in all not quite four years to a term of service. Under such a regime it is safe to question whether principles of self-support could be learned as easily as at Bassein or Rangoon. Bassein had but few changes. Its missionaries were Abbott, Beecher, Carpenter, and Nichols. Their service extended over the whole of the history and these men fitted into each other's thoughts to a remarkable degree. Rangoon, too, on the other hand has had a remarkable line of unbroken missionary personnel and policy in the remarkable Vinton family who extend over the whole history: J. H. Vinton, J. B. Vinton, S. Vinton, A. E. Seagrave. Mrs. Seagrave is a Vinton.

B. Geographical Conditions.

The geographical conditions should be considered. Moulmein is a frontier station to a large extent. Agriculture is mixed between mountain cultivation and plains type of farming, tending more toward the latter type. Rangoon and Bassein are in the Irrawaddy River delta and have rich river bottom farms. On the whole, good crops can be secured annually. There are occasional floods but nothing more than is experienced in Moulmein. Communication is very easy by means of boat and steamer transportation on the rivers and creeks. In Moulmein communication is more difficult. Parts

of this area have no roads and rivers are usable only one day's journey from the city. All three fields have good markets in their large centers (but the best is the city of Rangoon) but the other fields are not at a great disadvantage.

Moulmein was combined with Thaton in 1907, which resulted in making Moulmein the greatest in population and largest in area of Karen fields in Burma. It has an enormous Karen population increasing by immigration from Siam. Rangoon and Bassein are comparatively small in extent. The Sgaw Karen population has been evangelized. Each field has about 16,000 converts while Moulmein has 6,000.

VIII. Achievements in Self-Support.

A. Education.

These fields finance the building of their schools, chapels, and the cost of education without American money. It is impossible to tell exactly how many schools the Bassein Karens have in the jungle villages but they are in excess of 170. A listing of the equipment for the town school will indicate what value these people put on education. The value of their high school plant is placed at 700,000 rupees or about \$260,000.

There are twenty-six buildings, dormitories for boys and girls, a steam laundry, steam-cooking plant, gymnasium and other buildings. All the main buildings are of brick, cement and not one cent of American money in any of these buildings with the exception of the two houses in which the missionaries live. (Except for one lady missionary working among high school girls there are no American missionaries in Bassein now.) The finest school

1. Robbins, J. E., "Following the Pioneers", p. 61.

and chapel in the province is the new Ko Tha Byu Memorial Hall just completed at a cost of 432,000 rupees (\$160,000).¹.

This building has an auditorium seating 1500 people, a large 60,000 rupee (\$22,000) pipe organ, and is lighted by the current from the school's electric powerhouse.

B. Evangelism and Extension.

The Karens have endowment funds for education invested in America, and an additional endowment in the form of two rice mills and a saw mill. Because of this foresight, and voluntary contributions the poorest boy or girl can secure the high school education at the small cost of about \$7.00 a year.

What Bassein has done for education, the Rangoon Karens have done in their way. Their educational plant compares in size with Bassein though the buildings are not as modern. They are serviceable and substantial. These people too have provided endowments of no small size, but they do not have rice mills and saw mills.

Moulmein has just completed a three story high school building of modern construction, and is modernizing the school plant to accomodate 600 pupils. Endowments are provided, too. There is also a very significant school in the Kyain group of villages that has received government recognition for teaching the English.

1. Robbins, J. E., "Following the Pioneers", p. 66.

C. Leadership and Self-Support.

In these three fields no money from America is used toward the payment of the salary of any pastor or evangelist or the building of churches. They provide for their own ministry. All the functions of selecting ministerial students, and Bible Women, educating, locating, ordaining and commissioning them and their own missionaries are performed by the local Karen churches. These three fields have now about 37,000 members in 407 churches and support about 800 workers and pastors. The 1934 reports for contributions are incomplete but exceed \$35,000 for the evangelistic work and pastoral support.

Dr. J. C. Robbins says:

The Karen is an evangelist and a missionary. He will cooperate and sacrifice for great ideals. The Karen has been, is still, and will continue to be the largest factor in the evangelization of the hill-tribes many of which are related to him. They have already undertaken this great task, and will never put it down until they lay the shining crown of victory at the Master's feet.¹

By working with the Burma Baptist convention, the Karen Conference, the Karen Women's Society, and by designated gifts from individuals Karens support their own foreign missionaries among the Chin, Kachin, Lahu, Wa, Lisu, Burmese, Karen and Shan peoples. The example of the Karens is stimulating to the Burmese church too.

D. Leaders and Administrative Responsibility.

These three fields have won a place of responsible

1. Chaney, C. E., "Report of Field Secretary", 1935.

leadership. Their best men have been given the missionaries' places in Bassein and Rangoon. Moulmein, too, has a significant leader who is the assistant to the missionary. Dr. C. E. Chaney, the Field Secretary of the Baptist Mission in Burma, writes:

Two of our largest Karen Stations, Bassein and Rangoon, are carrying their own expense. On a recent visit to Bassein it was a pleasure to learn how well the whole work is progressing with the School under Thra San Ba, B.A., B.D., the field forces led by Thra Maung Yin, and the Mill is under the direction of Thra Maunggyi. Sir San C. Po, M.D., is the official representative of all their work.¹

The Rangoon Karens have placed Saw Chit Maung, B.A., B.L., at the head of their educational work. The evangelistic work is superintended by another Karen. At Tharrawaddy formerly a part of the Rangoon field but now a separate mission station Thra San Baw is in complete charge of all the work. This man has recently received decorations of a high order from the British government for significant and distinctive work. He was a member of the Legislative Council of Burma.

Each of these fields has made significant contributions to the development of the Church in Burma. In this all too rapid survey, growth and achievement of larger places of responsibility have characterized these missions. As foreign aid has been cut off bit by bit the Karens enlarged their spheres of activities and accepted heavier burdens. Certainly "self-support" is something more than not receiving a quantity of money from a foreign mission society.

CHAPTER TWO

SELF-SUPPORT IN SHWEGYIN

I. Shwegyin and Its People.

A. The Geography.

Contiguous to the Moulmein Karen Mission field along its northern side and touching the eastern edge of the Rangoon Karen Mission field for the greater part of its length lies the Shwegyin Karen Mission. Moulmein will be found on the stem of the letter Y which leans slightly to the left. Rangoon and Bassein are found on the left arm of the letter and Shwegyin will occupy the right arm. This field is for the most part mountainous and the greater part lies east of the Sittang River. The place is rather isolated with reference to the main lines of travel and may be called a back-of-beyond area. It is back-of-beyondness, or isolation, that is characteristic of the territory and its people. The field is irregular in shape and contains slightly more than 3,700 square miles of territory. There is one main road thirty-five miles long and another road twelve miles long. These are usable only four and a half months of the year. These roads are not graded and many streams are not bridged. About six years ago a branch railway from Nyaunglebin was projected toward the city of Shwegyin but stops at the Sittang River bank three miles from the city. One or two small streams are used by shallow draught boats, hollow log canoes and bamboo rafts during the flood season, a period of

six months. Cart tracks and cattle trails for the most part form the lines of communication but even these fade out in the forests. In the mountains narrow trails about two feet wide and often obscured by grass and jungle growth are the only connections that prevent the people living in splendid isolation.

B. The People.

The people are sturdy mountain Karens. Force of circumstances make them hard-working for they have no permanent farms and fields. Each year a new farm is made by cutting down a patch of forest on the mountain side. This is then burned and seeds are planted among the ashes with a pointed stick before the monsoon rains come. For the rest of the year the man's crops are at the mercy of the insects, wild pigs, and other wild animals, weeds, torrential rains and landslides. The next year, a new farm is cleared, for weeds and rank tropical growth have covered the land. The farm is moved. In the foothills irrigation for the areca palm or betel nut is rather extensive. This was started by a Karen pastor who sought to make living conditions more tolerable for his people. It was something entirely new, but now has been developed extensively by all peoples. Small crude irrigation ditches lead off from the streams and water is flowed over the surface of the plantations. Ditch levels are not located by survey lines, but simply by seeing where water will flow down hill. Until recent years this cultivation was quite profitable but now due to high taxes and

various labour charges, the kinds of labour have been classified, so that there is very little profit. Litigation with non-Karens over carefully devised schemes to dispossess the owner of the lands has brought discouragement to the Karens.

II. The Founder of the Mission.

A. The Early Training of Rev. N. E. Harris.

Rev. Norman E. Harris, the founder of the Shwegyin mission, brought to his task adequate qualities of leadership secured under adverse conditions. His parental home was among the Berkshire Hills of Massachusetts. His parents were farmers of fair financial circumstances. Religion made very little impression on them. But at the age of seventeen the son experienced a conversion that made his chief ambition to be the work of saving others. The parents at first evidently were unsympathetic with the son for the latter was obliged to use the barn for his place of prayer and devotion, even in the cold winter months. Though he had only ordinary speaking ability, Harris preached wherever he could. A book on the life of Ann H. Judson was given to him with the result that he consecrated himself to the task of foreign missions. His parents strenuously opposed his inclinations toward missions and refused to assist him in his desire for an education, demanding his services and earnings until he had reached legal age. In the fall of 1836 at the age of 23 he set out afoot to go to what is now Colgate University, Hamilton, New York, a distance of one hundred and fifty miles. He completed the

course, evidently academy and college in eight years during which time he laboured morning and night to secure money to pay his expenses. He did not appeal for student aid funds but by diligence and economy supported himself and graduated free of debt, and in possession of a considerable library.

The independent spirit and undaunted faith in his ability to overcome obstacles proved valuable in later years.^{1.} This spirit he injected into the disciples at Shwegyin.

B. The Training as a Missionary.

In October 1844 Harris received missionary appointment, and sailed in July 1846 for Burma. He laboured in the Moulmein Karen Mission for seven years before founding the Shwegyin Mission. During this time in addition to learning a new language and serving a sort of missionary apprenticeship, consisting of itineration and evangelism among Karen churches other great important problems were brought to his notice. As pointed out in the previous chapter, Harris was in the midst of the system called "Maulmainia". He saw the effects. In 1850 larger responsibility was thrust upon him when Dr. J. S. Binney went home for furlough and the care of the churches, the school and the seminary were committed to his direction.

His early training secured against adverse circumstances, his independence of character and indomitable courage, helped form his convictions about the principles that should be infused into new and growing churches. A study of the Shwegyin Karen mission indicates that Harris was concerned with truths,

convictions and motives. He kept from doing things himself when he could find a native pastor to do the task. Thus he instilled into the Karens a sense of commission to a big task. There is ample evidence to show that he gave the first converts large responsibilities and so taught them confidence and courage to meet problems in the absence of their missionary. He did not pauperize the converts and introduce them to the luxuries of civilization by gifts of clothes, and free education. He allowed the Karens to found their own schools and pay for the cost of building both schools and churches. He expected the people to support their pastors because of his conviction that "paying pastors and hiring evangelists was a mistake". The pastors and leaders he chose were selected for their energy and natural ability to develop enterprizes among the people. An evidence of this is the irrigation project mentioned previously.

There was no opportunity to experiment with these convictions in Moulmein. They were being formed in Moulmein, and seem to have come to the forefront at the end of seven years. No missionary went so far as Harris in the development of self-support. Abbott, Beecher and Vinton in Bassein and Rangoon began with foreign aid and gradually diminished the amount of aid to a particular pastor or church. The amount of money cut off from one place was placed in a new work elsewhere. This was their plan of operation until a large number of converts were gathered. In the second generation of Christians the native churches were strong enough to carry on

largely without aid from America. Harris, on the other hand, launched self-support from the very beginning. The circumstances and their significance must not be overlooked. For the conditions in Moulmein were intolerable to so sensitive a character, the mission treasury was in a state of deficit since the year of the rift between the Baptists of the North and South over the slavery question, and Shwegyin was virgin territory entirely untouched by "Maulmainia" and the people were sturdy, independent folks.

III. The Early Years of the Shwegyin Karen Mission.

The circumstances surrounding the founding of Shwegyin in some ways seem incredible. On February 5, 1833, two Shwegyin Karens visited Moulmein and asked for tracts. Nothing more was ever heard about these men. Some years later in the space of the daylight hours of one day a Karen man, Saw Doo Moo lost his whole family except for a tiny baby by cholera. The tragedy of his loss temporarily unbalanced his mind and he set out through the forest wandering he knew not where. Week after week this continued until the man appeared among the Christian Karens of Tavoy over three hundred miles from home. These sympathetic Karens taught him the simple gospel truths and taught him to read the Scripture portions. He found comfort for his soul and returned to his village in Shwegyin from whence rumors of the long, expected fulfillment of the Karen traditions about their lost book spread to neighboring villages. This happened very shortly before Harris reached Shwegyin.

On the first Sunday after his arrival in Shwegyin Harris preached to the little group of Christian Karens and boatmen who had brought him and his family from Moulmein. This little service was conducted in a Buddhist wayside resthouse and Saw Tahree, a Karen man from the mountain region east of Shwegyin, secreted himself behind a tree and was fascinated by hearing a white man speak the Karen language. His mind dwelt upon the familiar Karen traditions of the younger white brother and the fulfillment of the story about the return of the Karen Book, for Harris had read from the Bible the text of the Sunday sermon. The man hurried back to his village and told what he had seen and heard. In a few days, he with his wife and her parents, some other Karens and a Shan man, eight persons in all, came to Harris and with very brief instruction all believed and were baptized November 13, 1853 and partook of the Lord's Supper. This little group of Christians with the missionary organized themselves into the first Karen church in Shwegyin. Soon Saw Tahree was placed in charge of this group of believers. His message was not great. It was sincere. He learned as he ministered and soon became an outstanding leader. This same spirit he passed on to his sons and they to their children. Tahree's descendants have been outstanding in their loyalty, devotion, and faith. They have been statesmen indeed in the development of the ideals of self-support in Shwegyin.

Due to the efforts of Saw Doo Moo, Saw Tah Ree and the Christian escort from Moulmein for the Harrises, the news of

the gospel travelled far and wide and especially in Saw Doo Moo's territory. At the end of one year 577 converts had been gathered into six churches and Saw Doo Moo had been ordained. He baptized most of the converts because Harris wished to give prominence to the Karen ministry. These seem like fortuitous events but there were other factors that came in. The Second Burmese War with England opened the doors of opportunity. In the realm of suffering and sacrifice, the lives of Saw Doo Moo and Harris profoundly affected the Shwegyin Karens. Indelible impressions had been made upon the new converts. They received the ideas that patience, prayer, suffering and sacrifice were in the nature of the Christian life and that Christianity required these in order to make it grow. This characteristic is quite apparent, even until now and enters into the Karens' willingness to support the Christian work. Ten days after organizing the first church Mrs. Harris died and the Karens carried on alone while Harris took his four children to Moulmein from whence they were taken to America by Miss Miranda Vinton. The lonely father returned to Shwegyin and associated himself with Saw Doo Moo and ordained him. Dr. S. F. Smith writes of this year of labor:

During the first six months after the mission was commenced, fifty-one were baptized, and, during the first year, five hundred and seventy-seven - of whom more than five hundred received the ordinance at the hands of one ordained native preacher (Saw Doo Moo). In the same year six Karen churches were formed, which were organized, January 20, 1855, as the 'Great Stone Association'. These churches were trained from the beginning to the duty of self-support; and

1. Smith, S. F., "Missionary Sketches", p. 124.

five of them at this time sustained their own pastors.¹.

Miss M. Vinton returned to Burma in March, 1856 and married Mr. Harris. The Karen Christians rejoiced for the new Mrs. Harris spoke the Karen language fluently. She was a good singer and school teacher. Her abilities in education supplemented those of her husband, and the Karens seemed to forget the tragedy that had occurred in the death of the first Mrs. Harris. On September 9, 1856, Mrs. Harris contracted jungle fever and died in a few days. Her death had a paralyzing effect on the Christians and the superstitious heathen then refused to listen to the gospel. Mr. Harris was ill after eleven years of continuous service in the Orient and was sent home to America. The Karens were left without a missionary.

During his stay in America Mr. Harris married the widowed sister of his first wife. They and the wife's little daughter arrived in Burma in 1858 and shortly afterwards the little girl died of throat trouble. Both Mr. and Mrs. Harris were afflicted with the same illness.

IV. Development of Self-Support 1861 - 1906.

A. Missionary Leadership until 1866.

Mr. Harris' connections with the Missionary Union were very uncertain and he divided his attention between Shwegyin and Moulmein. Harris had maintained a very loose connection with the Missionary Union since 1853. From that time he

seems to have had no regular appointment from the Missionary Union. He worked in an independent capacity though he always felt his converts were a part of the Baptist enterprise. With his return to America he broke the last tie that held him in Burma. These were the years when his feelings ran high about the findings of the Deputation of 1853. In 1862 Harris stepped out of the picture because he could not agree with the findings. Several makeshift arrangements were made to take care of the Shwegyin Christian churches. Mr. George P. Watrous received care of the churches until illness caused his withdrawal. A native preacher had been sent up from Moulmein but the arrangements were not satisfactory. Harris took two bright young Karen boys to America and placed them in Madison University for an education. In later years the name of Kah Chur, one of the boys, recurs in mission annals with great significance. The Toungoo missionaries, Mason and Cross, and Vinton from Rangoon, came to Shwegyin once a year but the rest of the time the Karens carried on alone except for a brief period under an assistant in the Karen work named La Chapelle.

B. An Unusual Karen Letter.

Until March, 1866, the Karens were left largely to themselves, but for Doo Moo and Tahree. However, the statistics indicate that by 1865 there were eighteen churches and 946 members. The Karens never forgot their ties with Mr. Harris. They wrote to him frequently and told of their difficulties and forsaken condition, but they stressed evangelism,

1. Smith, S. F., "Missionary Sketches", p. 127.

self-support and devolution of responsibility among themselves. In January, 1865, the Karens sent a very significant and unusual letter to the Missionary Union, the last paragraph of which reads:

During the year 1864 we have been consulting how to get back our Teacher Harris from America. We, the disciples of Shwegyin, have collected two hundred rupees (approximately one hundred dollars then), toward paying the passage of Teacher Harris; therefore, dear brothers and sisters in every place, great and small, male and female, have pity on us; pray for us and assist us to get back our teacher.

Signed, Teacher Paw-Maw.^{1.}

C. A New Venture in Self-Support.

Repeated disappointments, long periods without adequate supervision and responsibility without adequate training had taught the Karens a certain independence and steadfastness of purpose. A very simple but deep faith marked these people. After this unusual letter the Missionary Union reappointed Mr. Harris and he reached Shwegyin in March, 1866. Mrs. Harris followed in 1868. The Karens were overjoyed to see their old teacher and soon a conference was arranged with the pastors. Plans for evangelism among the heathen were decided upon, travelling companions for the evangelists were selected. Means of support for the preachers were received from the churches. The question of a school arose, likewise, whether a grant-in-aid from the government should be taken for the school as was done in other Karen stations. Pah Maw the writer of the unusual letter voiced the opinion of all, when he replied: "If we eat our

own rice, I think we shall enjoy it the better." This is an evidence that younger men had caught the spirit of self-support. However, a new teakwood school plant was built in 1874. This school and a dormitory with the furniture was in keeping with the scale of civilization of the Karens. The entire expense was furnished by Mr. Harris and the Karens.

D. A Karen Leader in Charge.

The work prospered, even while Harris was home on furlough in 1876. In 1873 Saw Kah Chur, the young man who had been educated in America undertook to conduct the mission affairs. He did a remarkable work and developed into a strong leader. This was the man who carried the load of responsibility, practically alone from 1882 until 1893. There were missionaries who gave oversight to the work during this period but Kah Chur knew the Karens and had their cooperation. From the early 1870's, Harris, now sixty years of age, had been pleading for a missionary associate, but none was sent except Mr. B. P. Cross who remained just a few months. When Harris went to America in 1876, a Rev. H. W. Hale of the Burma Mission assisted Kah Chur, but upon his return the next year Hale had gone and Kah Chur was alone. Harris remained in Shwegyin hindered by very indifferent health, until 1882 when he turned his face to America for the last time. He died on March 1, 1884.

E. Self-Support Against Overwhelming Odds.

The mission had the advice of several missionaries

for short periods until 1893 but Kah Chur was the real leader. The period 1885-1887 marks the Third Burmese War and with the annexation of Upper Burma, Shwegyin lost its importance as a government headquarters. The pacification of the country was long and hard and bandit forces attacked Shwegyin. In one of these raids the mission compound was attacked but the Karens resisted nobly and received recognition from the viceroy of India for their bravery. A short time later the beautiful teakwood church and school building was burned down, probably an act of incendiarism. The Karens began to collect money to rebuild and had collected a considerable sum when they were advised to invest their money in a land boom in America. This was about 1890. The money was lost and the Karens were in despair. There were long courses of litigation over the affair. Some of the money was recovered. The Missionary Union cooperated with the Karens and made itself a party to the litigation for the issues were confused. The missionary representative was removed and the Karens set about to rebuild their school and church.

F. Confidence Restored and Self-Support.

There was no missionary on the field, but the Karens undertook this vast project. It was necessary to get Rs 10,000 from the Missionary Union. The Karens dedicated the building in 1894. It seems, however, that before the building was started the Karens had made a request to the Missionary Union for a missionary and had asked specifically

for one of the sons of Rev. N. E. Harris. The youngest son Rev. E. N. Harris responded and arrived in Shwegyin, November 17, 1893. The building project was well under way then. There was general rejoicing over this turn of good fortune, but the Karens did not forget their obligations. In a year of time they collected the Rs 10,000 and paid it to the Missionary Union. It was the characteristic spirit of bearing their own burden and the Karens reiterated Paw Maw's spirit about earning one's own bread and eating it in contentment. This was a new phase in missions and self-support.

G. Large Advances in Self-Support.

Concomitant with the rebuilding of the educational plant came the impulse to undertake a larger field for extension and education. It resulted in clearly seeing the fact that churches without an adequate missions program are not vital churches. Evangelism had always been important among the Karens but in 1899 the task of watch-care and development of the Papun field was received from Moulmein, and Kyaikto, Kyaukkyi, and Nyaunglebin were opened as outstations. Land was purchased at Nyaunglebin and the jubilee of the founding of Shwegyin was celebrated with the dedication of an excellent school building and church. An agricultural and industrial school was started, but was changed to conform with the government code. Papun was the foreign mission field and the others notably Nyaunglebin were the home mission fields. The activities, contributions and membership went forward by leaps and

bounds. In 1893, aside for the special building fund, contributions totalled Rupees 5,000 (\$1,666) but in 1902 the ordinary contributions were Rupees 36,000 or \$12,000. Baptisms increased and the number of young men preparing for the ministry increased from three in 1893 to eighteen in 1906.

About 1903 a Home Mission Society was legally chartered under government to supervise the work among the churches, to locate Karen teachers, evangelists and native missionaries in the villages, to hold property and endowment funds and to employ, pay and discharge workers. At this writing, it holds a student loan fund, a school endowment, a home missions endowment, employs, supervises and pays about twenty native missionaries. Four of its members act as superintendents among the older churches. It holds over thirty acres of good rice farming land. This is a form of endowment for the town school. The title to the Nyaunglebin property and school compound of thirty acres more or less, likewise fourteen acres in Shwegyin are vested in this society. With reference to the Nyaunglebin Karens, Shwegyin exercises a trusteeship and holds the land and property in trust for Karen work there. It is now seeking to give the entire investment to Nyaunglebin and will do so as soon as a responsible organization is forthcoming.

H. A New Order in Mission Affairs.

It is probable that the recent separation of Nyaunglebin from Shwegyin may be a permanent separation. The

issues are multitudinous, but not insuperable. This should be considered as a stage of growth in missions. The problem requires the thinking of courageous leaders and may require considerable more time before a solution is attained for it involves the reorganization of Shwegyin and Nyaunglebin. Out of the attempts to find a solution of this vexing problem already an increased evangelistic effort is apparent, and a new vision about a suitable educational curriculum is being discussed. This will mark another stage in self-support. It is just now in the making and cannot be evaluated but it is full of promise for the future.

V. Continuity of Leadership and Self-Support.

A. Missionary Leadership Intermittent.

From the foregoing account it is quite apparent that the missionary leadership has not been continuous. Very soon after its founding for six years there was no missionary in charge and at other times the Karens carried on alone. At least a fourth of its history of eighty-two years the Karens were without missionary leadership. During the rest of the time there were some interim missionaries but never for more than a year or two often only several months.

B. Indigenous Leadership.

The indigenous leadership has developed in the remarkable way of assuming responsibility for the conduct of the mission. It did not always consist of highly trained men, except for Kah Chur. This leadership expressed itself

in no uncertain ways about the return of Rev. N. E. Harris and the appointment of his son.

A number of young men have been trained in college. Some of these have returned to assist the people. Notable among these have been Kah Chur and in the present time Saw Marshall Shwin and Saw Toke Kyi. These two men now have charge of the educational work in the absence of the missionary. Other men have entered into the public services of government chiefly as inspectors of schools. The churches have had a ministry from men who were trained slightly more than the average church member but these men had ability, consecration and spiritual power developed in a situation requiring independence and the faithful discharge of responsible stewardship. The example of the founder of the mission and the force of circumstances during the early years have made a profound contribution to self-support.

The time has come when the standard of training and attainments of the ministry must be raised and the churches are beginning to understand this problem. To this end Saw Raleigh a young man, winsome, alert and of spiritual perception has been released to serve as secretary-treasurer of the Karen Theological Seminary where he is making a significant contribution to the student body by his ideals of independence, service and sacrifice. This young man is touching the students with less than college training. Members of the Harris family believed in a better educated ministry and a memorial endowment fund has been placed with the president of Judson College

1. Resolution of the Shwegyin Karen Home Mission
Society, meeting dated September 11, 1930.

in Rangoon. This fund is to aid in the training of young men of college grade whose life purpose is to be a ministry to the Karen churches. Already one man receives partial assistance, while another man at the end of one year in college entered the English seminary. The educational standards for Bible women have been raised, too.

VI. Attitude of Karens and Evaluations.

A. The Heritage from the Past.

The pastors and leaders of the former years have passed on a heritage of devotion and consecration to the rising generation who give promise that the standards of stewardship and self-support will not be lowered. The American Baptist Foreign Mission Society formed a Joint Committee consisting of four missionaries and twelve indigenous people for each of the Burman and Karen Groups. This committee was charged with the task of integrating the work, disbursing money and appropriations and advising on various problems in the missions belonging to its own racial group. The Karen Joint Committee secured funds by taking Rupees 600 of the appropriation which each Karen missionary had for evangelism, literature, office and personal assistant. This money was given to the local committee in the station to use in whatever way it chose. The Shwegyin Karen Home Mission Society took the action as given in the resolution:

The Joint Committee gave rupees 600 for the Shwegyin Home Mission. Let the Home Mission decide. We do not receive and we choose secretary-teacher Saw Tha to write and tell the Joint Committee.¹

This resolution caused no little consternation in other Karen fields and in the Joint Committee until the spirit of the Shwegyin Karens was understood. The debate centered around the fact that for seventy-five years the Shwegyin Karens had been supporting their own pastors and churches and they did not propose to start a practice of receiving foreign money. One of the Shwegyin representatives to the committee suggested that the Karens had grown up and it was a tragic thing to know the child was still unweaned. This attitude taken by Shwegyin, combined with the depression, resulted in two years in all Sgaw Karen stations except Tavoy and Loikaw being deprived of foreign aid. Bassein and Rangoon, the largest fields were not given an allotment from the first.

B. The Karens and Their School.

By formal vote of the Great Stone Association of Karen churches, March 16th, 1934, the Karens voted that the management of the town school be taken by the Karens and that a man be chosen "to work in apprenticeship under and in cooperation with Mr. Klein beginning May 25th, 1934 so that the person selected may be able to take charge of the work efficiently when Mr. Klein leaves Shwegyin on furlough". This has been done and now the Karens are exercising complete control and support of their work for there is no missionary at Shwegyin.

C. Evaluations.

In the year 1927 the following evaluation of the Shwegyin Karens is given:

1. Chaney, C. E., Forty-first Annual Report. Burma
Baptist Missionary Convergence, 1927, p. 65.

2. Chaney, C. E., Field Secretary's Report, Shwegyin
Karen Station Work, February 20, 1935.

Shwegyin is a work which merits special approval. I was deeply impressed with the character and devotion of the Karen leadership on that field. Their field is well divided and organized with responsibility for various parts well located, and when I came to look over the matter of contributions, considering their ability to give, and their possessions, for mountain Karens are not a wealthy people, I do not think they would take second place to any. Their annual contributions average just over Rupees 10 per capita.¹

The report on devolution in the Shwegyin Karen Mission is a part of a survey made eight years later than the preceding quotation.

From what has already been stated, it is evident that the Karens of this field have long since taken over the responsibility of this field. When Mr. and Mrs. Klein go on furlough, they will carry on. One might characterize their past work as being strongly or chiefly evangelistic and educational. They are now rapidly moving into a new stage of development and while it will continue to be evangelistic and educational, it will also be characterized as the girding of themselves for the more serious and difficult task of consolidating their efforts to create and maintain a Christian civilization or social order for future generations of Karens. They are moving out of a merely evangelical stage into the beginning of what in time will be a mighty social order. While consolidating their own work they have also begun a more active missionary work in the Salween District and also have placed a worker among the Shans thus maintaining their missionary zeal for others.²

In any study or problem of self-support, the method followed in Shwegyin has much to commend it. It is obvious that the character and skill of the founder had much to contribute toward a successful issue.

CHAPTER THREE

FINDINGS, COMPARISONS, AND SUMMARY.

I. Self-Support And The Founding Of Missions.

A. The Ideals of the Missionary Body.

In any study of self-support, the point of view of the founders of a church or mission has a profound effect on the life of the organization and its members. The operation of the two theories of self-support among the Karens indicates clearly the major importance of definite ideas and objectives when a new mission work is started. The reasons that caused the early missionaries to differentiate Christianity from the Buddhist doctrine of gaining merit by making religious donations, is probably the result of faulty observations. In this connection we must remember they first worked among the Burmans and the practice was well-established by the time the Karens with their animistic thought background came. Nothing was known at that time about the animists' idea of sacrifice. This is fundamental to any essential act of animistic worship. Through a sacrifice the devotee is supposed to receive a sense of satisfaction and fellowship in a right act. The Burman Buddhist, on the other hand, accumulates merit by a sequence of acts of almsgiving. These he hopes have been sufficiently correct to lay up a sort of "bank account" or capital or merit. Thus he is assured of a better Karma in the next transmigration. We must remember that these missionaries were pioneers in Protestant missions. They had no blazed

trails and practices to guide them. Again, these missionaries could hardly be expected to have divested themselves of the social and religious heritage of the people who sent them to the new lands. It must be remembered that the Baptist Missionary Union was conducting extensive missions in America at the same time as in Burma and along with other denominations was subsidizing churches and schools. The propriety of receiving aid was not questioned. Parents assisted their children to get a start. What better way was there than to foster the new churches by erecting buildings and paying pastors? We must also remember the "spirit of the age" in America was that of a pioneer's generosity. No needy person was turned away because he was poor. Foreign missionaries in theory are supposed to be exponents of self-support, but they reflect the practices that operate in the churches from which they come. If a sense of robust self-dependence is lacking in the home churches, the missionaries probably will not have given much thought to self-support on the mission field. Under the conditions that prevailed prior to the coming of the Karens in the Moulmein Mission it is not surprising little or no attention was given to self-support.

B. The Ideals of the Karens.

The first Karen convert became an evangelist in 1828 immediately upon his baptism. In Christianity he saw the fulfillment of the traditions held dear to every Karen heart. These consisted of the "Y'wa" legends. Dr. H. I.

1. Consensed from: Marshall, H. I., "The Karen
People of Burma", chapter XXI.

Marshall in his "The Karen People of Burma", says that the Karen people have three religious conceptions: The first is similar to the "mana" of the Melanesians; the second is animistic and personifies the forces in nature that control vegetation, the rains, mountains, rocks and streams. They attribute spirits to these; a few - good but most are bad and require innumerable sacrifices. The third conception is embodied in the "Y'wa" legends. Here we find the first parents in a garden under the protection of Y'wa, the Creator. There are the legends of forbidden fruit, temptation by a dragon, and others that closely parallel the accounts given in Genesis. To these must be added the tradition of the "Lost Book" and its return by the younger white brother. These traditions inspired the ancient Karen prophets to look for deliverance of the people from their wretched estate. The fulfillment of these traditions is what Ko Tha Byu, the first convert saw. The gospel message integrated so well with the traditions that it is not surprising that great numbers became Christian. 1. The Karens made the missionaries among them their deliverers and consequently strong loyalties were established and the Karens felt they must do something to help spread this most precious message. They therefore voluntarily gave of their time, energy and means. Who could tell the good news as Karens could? The sheer joy of release from the fears and the oppression that had enslaved the Karens for ages and the fact that there was a human champion for them caused the Karens to be Burma's evangelists. It was so totally different from

the situation among the Burmans.

II. Practical Problems of Self-Support.

A. Enthusiasm and Successes.

Some years elapsed before the missionaries understood how to make use of these traditions. In those days ministers and missionaries expected only vileness and dense ignorance about religious things from the heathen. They were trained to expect such things. One wonders how many sincere doubts arose about the orthodoxy of the early Karen converts. The presentation of the Christian message did not follow the expected course, but the evangelists were bringing those whose lives had been changed. These were unmistakable proofs that God's hand was upon the Karens.

B. Different Standards of Living.

The successes among the Karens brought very practical problems to the forefront. There was the desire to gain a large number of converts; to broadcast the message to the widest extent; missionary letters to America helped arouse the enthusiasm that created a great denomination, and, in turn that denomination sent more missionaries and secured money that the achievement of results could be greater and quicker. How could these things be done better, than to hire more preachers? It was a natural reasoning. Just a short time after the Karens began to evangelize a very practical problem came to the forefront, namely, a salary scale commensurate with work and zeal displayed, judged by the criterion

of numbers of converts won. There were the standards of living of the natives, - higher for the Burman and more simple for the Karen, who were also less literate. This naturally was a consideration why the Karen evangelists should receive less salary than the Burman. On the basis of evangelistic results, the time spent away from home, and the cooperation the Karens gave in sharing the burden of supporting the mission work (for the Karens were contributing) the Karens ought to have the better salaries, - more work, more results, deserved better wages. Jesus did not discriminate about the salary scale for those who began to work at noonday. The Karen preachers worked on because they loved their new religion and their missionaries, but the differences were being observed and Carpenter makes much of them in his book on "Self-Support in Bassein". It is suggested that probably forced economies arising out of the difficulties of securing money because of the failure of the Second Bank of the United States in 1837 may have aggravated the condition on the mission field. We find all the missionaries mentioning lack of funds in the face of unparalleled opportunities.

III. Separation, Education, and Self-Support.

A. Karens Propagate Christianity.

The missionaries decided it would be best to develop the Karen Churches apart from the Burmese churches for a group consciousness was being created. The Karens were identifying Christianity with the fulfillment of their traditions. Hence it really was not a foreigner's religion and

1. Binney, J. G., "Twenty-Six Years in Burma", p. 195.

through their contributions of various sorts Karens felt they were lifting the race to a higher level. Naturally, they wanted schools and needed a better educated ministry.

B. Schools Established.

To provide for these, the missionaries and the Board in America finally appointed Dr. J. G. Binney. Educational work was thrust upon the missionaries by the Karens. Binney opened the theological seminary and a Normal School, April 27, 1846. This latter school was co-educational. Not all missionaries were in agreement about schools and the Binneys had to defend their position against the proponents of the theory that evangelism was the chief aim of missions.

C. Binney's Plan for Education.

After the experiment had been in operation two years Binney sent his plan of education to the Board. It is a long document. A part is given for it is a significant utterance on self-support:

If we do our duty, with the blessing of God, ten years more or less should see the Karens at the head of their own churches and schools (so far as peculiar to each station) and supporting them too. Supporting them because both willing and able to support them, and I may add, because thus conducted by themselves. If at that time they determined to have all their teaching done at their own door, and to pay for it, I should cease to feel a part of the objections which now arise in my own mind - the part connected with our present mode of supporting Foreign Missions.¹

1. Condensed from: Carpenter, C. H., "Self-Support in Bassein," p. 159.

D. Abbott's Attitude on Self-Support.

Dr. E. L. Abbott was home on durlough during much of the period 1845-1847. He left Calcutta for Burma in November 1847 and did not see the Binneys until September of 1848. He went to Moulmein to see the man who made the above pronouncement on self-support. Abbott heartily endorsed Binney's position on the matter of self-support and education - both normal and theological. Carpenter in his book "Self-Support in Bassein" page 116 and following gives an extended discussion of this conference. Abbott had nothing better to offer in the way of self-support. Henceforth, Abbott insisted that the Karens would not be evangelized by a great number of preachers hired by foreign missionaries. He emphasized that

Karens must sustain Karens....churches must sustain themselves, must begin, must learn, and believe and feel that that is the law of Christ's kingdom: 'Heathen countries must be evangelized through a native ministry.' The task of the missionary should be furnishing 'the Bible and theology, education to teachers and ministers, books, etc., and a general guidance such as Paul gave to the churches he planted.'¹.

Abbott expressed the fundamental principle of self-support and chose to obtain a gradual diminution of foreign aid. From the literature and records of the period 1836-1848 he seems not to have arrived at any definite conclusions regarding self-support except to indicate "the system of Maulmainia" was not working to the best interests of the Karen churches. That is precisely the same conviction entertained

1. Abbott, Report of the Association Meeting, January 1851, from Carpenter, C. H., "Self-Support in Bassein", pp. 166 and 169.

by Mason, Vinton and Binney but they were in Tavoy and Moulmein and Abbott was viewing the situation from a distance. There is an undated letter written about 1841 and reproduced in "Self-Support in Bassein", page 57, wherein Abbott is much concerned over the fact that his appropriations were not as large as he expected and he was forced to reduce pastors' salaries. During the Association meeting of Bassein churches in 1851 a "Home Mission Society" was organized. It is recorded of Bassein:

Hitherto, this work has been conducted here as in other missions, - by native preachers in the employ of the missionary.¹

We read further:

The Society is under the direction of the Karens themselves, - its secretary, treasurer, and committees, all Karens. Of course the missionary will keep in sight to advise, impel, or restrain as need may be. The American Baptist Missionary Union is the parent and patron of the society, and may be a contributor.... It is our expectation that the support of all the preachers who require aid, the supply of poor churches, and the sending of missionaries to regions beyond, - indeed, all the operations of the 'home department' - will be conducted by the society.²

IV. Self-Support Until 1853.

A. Comparison of Moulmein - Rangoon - Bassein.

Abbott's plan of self-support was operated by Vinton in Rangoon; whose preachers were less removed from Moulmein than Bassein. More Rangoon pastors had been trained in the system called "Maulmainia" and the approach to self-support was probably slowed. According to the Missionary Union Report for 1850, page 62, the 847 Moulmein Karens gave

Rupees 417 or 7.8 annas per capita. The Rangoon Karens gave Rupees 320 or 6 annas per head and the 4,500 Christians in Bassein built two good churches costing \$400, besides supporting three pastors about Rupees 180. This would make the per capita gift about 2.4 annas, using $2\frac{1}{4}$ Rupees to a dollar for exchange rate in all cases. According to the 1848 report "forty native assistants were supported in connection with Sandoway (this is the early name for Bassein) at an expense to the Union of only 600 Rupees. This system of self-support is working well". In the case of Moulmein, Dr. Binney indicates the report does not include the amount given to the poor, nor presents to their preachers, nor anything done for their chapels. Nor does it include anything contributed by the missionaries.

B. Hindrances to Self-Support.

When it is remembered that Moulmein depleted its native staff several times to send its best pastors to go as missionaries to Rangoon and Bassein and was ready to do it again, a question arises as to how much "Maulmainphobia" controlled the Karens. That it did to some extent is apparent from Abbott's letter of October 12, 1848, written during his visit with Binney in Moulmein. In this letter he severely condemned the situation existing in the Moulmein Burman Church.

C. The Issues Before the Deputation of 1853.

Whatever we conclude about the accuracy of the

statistics available it is very apparent that the Karen missionaries were striving to advance the Karen people by making use of them and trusting them with more responsibility. They were confronted with the task of assimilating a mass movement toward Christianity; educating and enlisting the Karen Christians in a joyful cooperation to the advancement of the gospel. The "missions system" was inimicable to best results and must be destroyed. The fact must not be overlooked that Harris was present in Moulmein and must certainly have known the feelings the system engendered in Messrs. Mason, Abbott, Vinton and Binney. When the break came in 1853 he was ready. Such a break seems inevitable. The writer believes the paying of pastors and the subsidizing of native churches constituted the occasion for the meetings at which the Deputation of 1853 and the conference of missionaries seemed to be at such a wide variance of opinions. The issue at the root of the matter was the making of Christianity indigenous. Christianity in order to grow and to conquer must have an evangelistic spirit that arises out of the lives of the believers. Hence it must be self-sustaining, self-propagating and naturally self-governing. The Karens furnished these elements. The fact that missionaries differed on ways and means to effect this only served to show that men were sincere in their ideas about the direction to be taken. It is significant that the convention never questioned evangelism, extension of mission territory, and the place of the Karen people in this vast movement. On the other hand, the important problem of educa-

tion was not understood and this really was left to solve itself at the behest of the Karen people.

V. Self-Support After 1853.

The fact that a number of missionaries separated from the Missionary Union in 1853 and took a great number of Karen converts with them to form the American Baptist Free Mission Society was heartbreaking at the time, but it drew the missionaries and the Karens together into desirable relationships like nothing else could. The Karens received a sense of ownership and group consciousness, probably most pronounced in Bassein and Rangoon. The Karens took a justifiable pride in the fact they were partners in a great enterprize. The missionary took the place of an advising partner to the Karen and exercised his authority by right of his personality and character rather than by right of appointment and control of money. There have been times when probably the sense of pride seemed almost to become conceit but these occasions have been tempered by a beautiful humility and sense of a great task yet unfinished. The Karens still feel the need for their missionaries. Had foreign aid been discontinued to the Karen fields of Moulmein, Rangoon and Bassein at this juncture the mission probably would have been better off. Much of the controversy that ensued would have been avoided. The spirit displayed by the Karens indicates that complete self-support could have been obtained in 1853 but other counsels prevailed.

VI. Self-Support in Shwegyin.

A. Sufferings and Sacrifices in the First Years.

With reference to Shwegyin, the conference of 1853 permitted Harris to state his convictions about self-support and to experiment with them in virgin territory. It was a most difficult experiment. Tragedy, sacrifice and suffering characterize this mission, but as we have seen, these contributions by the Harrises and the Karens have brought forth fruitage that place these poor mountain Karens second to none in the matter of self-support.

B. Integration of Ideas of Self-Support.

The integration of ideas of self-support was slow, steady and sure. Nothing new was attempted except the Karens themselves showed they needed and wanted something new. This is evidenced by their request for the reappointment of Harris, their various school building projects, their missionary enterprise and the request for the appointment of Harris' son. Other missionaries were offered and sent, but the Karens trusted to their kinship in suffering with the Harrises. We cannot understand the Shwegyin mission without considering these most personal elements. These are deep in the soul of the Shwegyin Karens.

VII. Achievements in Self-Support.

A. Per Capita Giving.

As for the policy of self-support from the very beginning, the records show that Shwegyin started with a per capita gift of about three cents in 1856, or two years after

the founding of the mission. The giving increased each year; the climb was steady and upward. In 1895 Shwegyin definitely passed Moulmein. In 1898, it passed both Rangoon and Bassein at about \$2.10 per capita per year. Since that time Shwegyin has steadily increased the level until in 1905 it was about \$1.60 in excess of its nearest rival. According to the annual reports of the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, this high average has been maintained. A comparison is given below and assumes the accuracy of the reports furnished by the various stations to the above Society. For the year 1927, the per capita gift:

Shwegyin	\$3.94	Shwegyin	\$3.94	Shwegyin	\$3.94
Moulmein	<u>2.07</u>	Rangoon	<u>3.46</u>	Bassein	<u>1.37</u>
	\$1.87		\$.48		\$2.57

For the year 1935 the per capita gift:

Shwegyin	\$2.27	Shwegyin	\$2.27	Shwegyin	\$2.27
Moulmein	<u>1.35</u>	Rangoon	<u>1.20</u>	Bassein	<u>1.21</u>
	\$.92		\$1.07		\$1.06

In each case Shwegyin exceeds other stations. During 1927 both Moulmein and Rangoon were making extra efforts to finance their new school buildings, and Bassein was just finishing the payments on their new buildings. There were no new buildings in 1935 in any of these fields. All fields suffered severely from the depression. The price of unhusked rice was approximately \$6.00 less per hundred baskets in Shwegyin than elsewhere. Considering the type of country;

the nature of the farming and the fertility of the soil, the size of the contributions are still more significant. It may be urged that life is simpler in Shwegyin and the wants of the people are fewer, but the same simplicity may be found also in the other missions, in the areas a short distance from the main arteries of travel. The great difference in the per capita giving cannot be accounted for on the basis of simpler living, but rather on the basis of early training, indigenous leadership and loyalty to the kingdom task.

B. Evangelism an Index of Self-Support.

If we judge effective evangelism to be a part of self-support and the number of Christians in the church necessary to win one convert as an index of zeal, then we must consider the average for the period 1900-1927, as follows:

Moulmein	17.6	Rangoon	17.6
Bassein	21.9	Shwegyin	14.8

For the period 1928-1935 the averages are:

Moulmein	19	Rangoon	22
Bassein	22	Shwegyin	15

C. Extension and Missions Enterprizes.

If evangelism is considered from the point of view of extension or the establishment of missions we find Shwegyin has made significant contributions in the founding of Nyaunglebin, Papun, Kyaikto and Kyaukkyi. These territories are contiguous to Shwegyin. Nyaunglebin has become a separate mission. Papun has been let go to do for itself but all the

part of the Papun field north of that town has been reserved by Shwegyin for its distinctive mission territory and reaches into Siam. Kyaikto being a largely Burmanized territory, has been transferred to the Moulmein Burman Mission. It is a fair criticism to say Shwegyin has not sent missionaries to work among other tribes in the distant parts of Burma such as Bassein, Rangoon and Moulmein have done among the Kachins, Lahus, Siamese, etc. Shwegyin, however, has maintained its interest in this type of extension through the Burma Baptist Missionary Convention, the Karen Conference and the Chengmai Mission (Siam) by reason of contributions that form an equitable share of the cost of these agencies. Shwegyin was the first of three of eleven Sgaw Karen missions to pay the full apportionment to the Smith Memorial Buildings at the Karen Theological Seminary, besides keeping the contributions for current expenses to the same institution at a high level, comparing very favourably with other missions. This is eminently true also with the Judson College Chapel Fund. Shwegyin though paying a higher proportion of its quota than other stations, like them failed to meet its apportionment. Rather than operating independently, Shwegyin has considered it would be more advantageous to cooperate in these union enterprises by assuming a just share of their expense. Independence gave way to cooperation in the interests of self-support for all of the Karen work in Burma.

D. Stewardship and Independence.

The Government of Burma will often contribute one fourth to one half the cost of approved expenditures connected with the erection of new school buildings. It however, requires a mortgage to be executed in its favour in perpetuity. This is the law. Other Missions have accepted the principle of mortgage in perpetuity on the building and the ground upon which the building is located. They have not seen fit to question this principle. The Shwegyin Karens are now erecting buildings, and in the spirit of Pah Maw who declared: "If we eat our own rice, I think we shall enjoy it better," they have decided not to accept a grant-in-aid from government. The writer was requested to learn the feeling of the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society on this important matter, stating to the Society that most of the debate was about the Karens' unwillingness to mortgage the future of Christianity by entering on an obligation from which redemption was not possible. This is an aspect of stewardship that indicates self-support is not a matter of money alone. True self-support is not confined to money but is to be found in an intelligent independence which seeks to establish Christian work on a basis free from obligations and without burden to others.

VIII. Summary Statements on Self-Support.

A. A Mission Tradition on Self-Support.

In this study we have seen self-support may be conditioned by several factors, some of which are the racial

and social heritage of the converts, continuity of leadership missionary and indigenous, initial manner of approach toward establishing a self-supporting church, the mission policy toward evangelism and extension and the quality of leadership the indigenous people receive. We have seen too, self-support is like a growth from a simple organism - to one of more complexity. It would seem best for a mission to have some very definite guiding principles about self-support. There should be a well-expressed mission tradition of self-support that would help each missionary and native leader to arrive at some convictions of self-support early in their careers. Thus self-support could be in operation before the stage of complexity is reached. Self-support does not come spontaneously but is the result of careful inculcation of ideals of independence. These follow certain well defined principles that enlist the cooperative and sacrificial endeavours of missionary, native leader and convert.

B. Self-Support in Moulmein-Rangoon-Bassein.

There is nothing in the Moulmein, Rangoon and Bassein missions to show that it was impossible to reach self-support earlier. Undoubtedly, the coming of self-support was impaired by the "missions" organization and the practices under that system. As far as the Karens were concerned there is evidence that they expected and in fact did share in the cost of Christian work. The fact that a policy of gradual diminution of aid was followed is probably due to the difficulty of changing from the "missions" system. There was

genuine concern for the host of believers which became more numerous and created more complex problems. Consequently, the above policy seemed to be the best one to follow. The attitudes developed during this period of benevolent paternal solicitude were inimicable to a speedy achievement of self-support. There is nothing in the history of this group of missions to indicate any inability or lack of desire on the part of the Karens to bear the expense of the Christian work among them. The problems involved simply were not seen early enough, and the principles of self-support to be followed were not understood. Is not the gradual diminution of foreign aid a method of indulgence and solicitude rather than a theory of self-support? Certainly those very things that later make up self-support in these stations were present but were not put into operation quickly enough. A more reasonable attitude toward the necessity of self-support would be taken by converts if from the very beginning, the hearts and minds of converts were prepared with motives and convictions for an early achievement of self-support. In this connection the waste of effort and much time due to frequent changes in missionary leadership is revealed. If the missionary personnel lacks an adequate idea of self-support or if there is insufficient time for a missionary to secure the interest and cooperation of the native leadership and constituency, there will be a very slow motivation toward self-support, if there is any at all.

C. An Epitome of Self-Support.

The record of the Shwegyin Karens commends the policy followed in the achievement of self-support. Without the aid of large endowments, fertile rice farms, the income from saw mills and rice mills, these people have shown self-support does not depend upon foreign aid, but upon firm character, strong conviction, independent attitude and an intense loyalty to their task and leaders. The policy of nibbling at an achievement of self-support deprives the indigenous Christians of their full share of the burden of the gospel. Self-support should be accompanied by self-government from the beginning. The achievements of all the Karen missions ably demonstrate what ought to be an established mission policy everywhere, namely, self-support from the very beginning.

Financial self-dependence is only a part of self-support, the achievement of which does not depend upon favourable local economic conditions. It is not true that more wealth assures a greater degree of financial independence. However, the rate of the giving of money indicates how much the laity and native leadership have learned the principles of self-support. The enlistment and training of native leaders who will inspire their constituency to accept the responsibility of supporting Christian work, because responsibility has been devolved to them, is a major part of self-support. It is obvious too, that in each of the missions studied, zeal for aggressive evangelism and extension of the sphere of mission operations, were concomitant with the acceptance of more

responsibility, or the achievement of a large task and that it was not induced from the outside, but sprang from within the Christian body itself. These are all essential parts of self-support.

GTU Library



3 2400 00670 8972

LIBRARY USE ONLY

